

AI and the Path Forward at Santa Monica College (SMC)

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Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education presents a transformative opportunity to enhance teaching, learning, and administrative processes. At Santa Monica College (SMC), we envision a multifaceted, collaborative approach to harnessing AI's potential while addressing challenges such as equity, ethics, and accessibility. This document outlines the AI Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations to establish SMC as a leader in AI literacy, integration, and policy development.

Recommendations

1. Establish an AI Policy Task Force

Vision: Create policies that guide and support the effective and ethical use of AI at SMC, ensuring academic integrity, ethical standards, and equitable access.

Proposed Steps:

- Form a collaborative task force of faculty, students, classified staff, administrators, IT, and tech specialists. Include representatives from Student Judicial Affairs.
- Benchmark AI policies at other institutions to inform our approach.
- Identify key focus areas: academic integrity, ethical use, data privacy, accessibility, and vetting of AI tools prior to adoption at SMC.
- Draft guiding principles and specific policies.
- Pilot draft policies in select academic courses and use cases; gather faculty and student feedback through surveys.
- Adjust policies based on feedback and finalize for implementation.
- Communicate new policies effectively through workshops, forums, and accessible materials.

Equity Considerations: Policies must explicitly support ethical and equitable AI use, limiting misinterpretations that could hinder AI integration.

2. Build an AI Literacy Collaboration

Vision: Foster AI literacy across the SMC community, equipping students, faculty, and staff with the skills to use AI responsibly and effectively.

Proposed Actions:

- **For Students:**
 - Develop a 1-unit online course or a Canvas module on AI literacy.
 - Partner with library faculty to integrate existing resources.
- **For Faculty:**
 - Leverage CCC training opportunities, such as micro credentials and CVC@One courses.
 - Create and share an AI literacy course/module on Canvas Commons.
- **For Non-Credit Learning:**
 - Explore noncredit course development in AI to support ongoing professional and personal learning.

Equity and Access: Ensure equitable access to AI tools by:

- Partnering with organizations to provide free or low-cost pro-level AI tool subscriptions.
- Equipping campus labs and libraries with robust AI resources.
- Offering beginner-friendly training and flexible learning options, including asynchronous modules.

Definition of AI Literacy:

The ability to understand, evaluate, and responsibly use AI tools in various contexts, from coursework to pedagogy.

3. Address "Bot Students" in Enrollment Services

Vision: Establish transparent policies and procedures to identify and address enrollment challenges and "bot students" while maintaining academic integrity.

Proposed Actions:

- Define "bot students" and provide examples or scenarios for faculty awareness.
 - Develop clear protocols for preventing, identifying, and addressing bot-related issues in courses.
 - Communicate these protocols through training and support materials for faculty.
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4. Integrate AI Across All College Functions

Vision: Avoid siloing AI initiatives by embedding AI into all aspects of SMC operations and culture.

Proposed Actions:

- Center AI-related workshops and discussions in Fall FLEX Day for faculty, classified staff, and administrators.
- Convene specialized sessions for departments such as tutoring centers, counseling, and financial aid to explore AI integration.
- Pilot AI-powered tools, such as:
 - **In Tutoring Centers:** AI-driven tutoring tools to enhance support.
 - **In Counseling and Financial Aid:** AI-powered chatbots to provide quick, accurate responses and connect students to resources.

Equity Considerations: Promote an equity-centered approach by mitigating biases in AI tools and ensuring accessibility for all users.

5. Highlight SMC's Leadership in AI

Vision: Position SMC as a leader in AI literacy and education within the broader community.

Proposed Actions:

- Create a public-facing AI webpage highlighting:
 - Policies and initiatives.
 - Training resources and opportunities.
 - Success stories and case studies.
 - Share findings and best practices at conferences and in publications.
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Survey Insights

Recent surveys of SMC full and part-time faculty underscore the SMC community's readiness to engage with AI:

- **94% of respondents** believe there should be policies around AI in higher education.
 - **87% of respondents** expressed interest in training on AI integration in teaching.
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Conclusion

The AI Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations outline a comprehensive, equity-focused, and collaborative path forward for SMC. By establishing thoughtful policies, fostering AI literacy, addressing challenges like "bot students," and embedding AI into all facets of the college, SMC can lead the way in leveraging AI for transformative impact. We encourage the Academic Senate to endorse these recommendations and begin implementation.